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Letter dated 18 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the response of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to the statement delivered by the representative of the United States of America to the Security Council, at its 5949th meeting, held on 6 August 2008 on the item entitled "The situation concerning Iraq" (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dr. Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
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Annex to the letter dated 18 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

The statement made by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America at the Security Council meeting of 6 August 2008 contained provocative claims regarding the Syrian Arab Republic. Those claims are without foundation and, like previous claims of that kind, lack the slightest credibility. As has become customary, they belong in the context of misleading and baseless United States policies aimed at disowning responsibility for the failure of United States forces to achieve peace and security in Iraq, and of placing the blame elsewhere. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic categorically rejects such accusations.

The Syrian Arab Republic wishes again to stress that it is as concerned about security and stability in Iraq as it is concerned about security and stability within its own borders. The two countries are by nature closely intertwined strategically and geographically. The numerous connections between them are underscored by the ties of history and language, as well as by social, family and economic links. It should be emphasized once again that while the Syrian Arab Republic fulfils all of its duties with regard to preserving the security, sovereignty, independence and stability of Iraq, the United States as the occupying Power has a duty to honour its commitments. This is especially true given that Iraq continues to suffer as a result of the United States' policies and of its failed military adventure, the repercussions of which have been felt throughout the region.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic again draws attention to the letter addressed by its Permanent Representative to the President of the Security Council (document S/2008/321, issued on 13 May 2008), which underlines the unilateral measures that it has taken to secure the borders.

The Governments of the Syrian Arab Republic and of Iraq are progressing steadily and successfully in working together to secure the borders and prevent infiltration. Their cooperation has led to substantial achievements, which have gained the praise of senior Iraqi officials and of a number of United States military officials. One United States military official described that cooperation as action of the most intense kind, and stated that it had led to a marked decrease in the number of infiltrators. The recommendations adopted at the second meeting of the Committee for Security Coordination and Cooperation of States neighbouring Iraq, held in Damascus on 13 and 14 April 2008, welcomed the "positive cooperation between Iraq and neighbouring States in combating terrorism and securing borders". That statement contrasts with, and casts doubt on, the claims made by the United States.

The Syrian Arab Republic is host to over one million Iraqi refugees. The Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States made no reference to them or to the burden incurred by Syria as a result of reckless United States policies. Those refugees were forced by the United States war and by violence and destruction to abandon their homes and possessions in search of security and stability. Our Government wishes to reiterate its support for a peaceful political process in Iraq and the achievement of peace and stability throughout the country, so that the

refugees and others like them in neighbouring States may return voluntarily to their country and in turn help rebuild what the war has destroyed. This position was shared by all of the States that participated in the International Conference on Addressing the Humanitarian Needs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons inside Iraq and in Neighbouring Countries, which took place in Geneva on 17 and 18 April 2007.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic wishes to reiterate that foreign forces must leave Iraq and ensure the full stability and sovereignty of that country. The United States must refrain from openly intervening in Iraq's internal affairs and hindering the political process. The Syrian Arab Republic calls upon the United States to allow Iraqis to complete the process of national reconciliation with a view to achieving peace and security in Iraq. This would ensure a life of dignity for Iraqis of all backgrounds and political affiliations, in an Iraq whose land and people are united and which exists harmoniously within its broader Arab and Islamic context, free from the policies of hypocrisy, aggression and lies that were evident in the statement of the United States Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative